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New Schools Another Step Closer

Department of Education and Culture (to July 99)

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A short-list of interested companies are preparing detailed proposals to build 31 schools across the province.

In the first stage, regional evaluation teams -- with government and school board representatives -- evaluated more than 70 submissions, and narrowed the list to between three and four interested partners per region.

"We urgently need schools, and -- with a highly competitive field -- we're on target to deliver good schools, within budget, as quickly as interested companies can build them," Education and Culture Minister Robbie Harrison said.

For stage two, short lists are now in place for six groups of schools, roughly organized by region. The short-listed groups by region are: four in the Strait; three in Cape Breton-Victoria; four in Chignecto-Central; three in Annapolis Valley & Southwest; four in Halifax West; and four in Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) & Halifax East.

Work is already under way in this second stage. Proposal requirements include a detailed vision, budget, financing and leasing arrangements, and plans for community consultation and timely school construction. Once a partner is selected in each region, the partner will work closely with government, the school board and communities on project details.

Companies must submit detailed proposals by July 31. In all cases, leases will be signed before construction begins.

"Each interested group knows we want to see urgently-needed schools open as quickly as possible," Mr. Harrison said. "We expect our partners to deliver."

In addition to the 31 new schools announced in December 1997, six additional schools are already being planned or under construction. As well, the Department of Education and Culture is working with school boards on renovation projects.

NOTE: The following is intended for use by broadcast media.

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Education and Culture Minister Robbie Harrison says schools are urgently needed and the government is on target to deliver good schools, within budget.

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